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الموضوع

I put my make-up on everyday
hoping to catch your attention somehow.
I thought I needed you
But I was just a fool
I am much stronger without you.
You were an anchor dragging me down
With you I was only going to drown
As I sit here watching my kids starve
It's still a better death than being in your arms.

After we entered Syria, my children
and I were taken to a house for women that
was more like a prison. We stayed in a locked
house for 3 months while my husband did
his training and religious classes. I would constantly
ask what was going on and how long we had to
stay there. This was all a waste of time considering
no one spoke English. Most people (women) there
were all uneducated from Arab countries. All
like me, waiting for their husbands to pass
their classes. Some men got their wives and

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children after only a few weeks. Others took longer because they had to keep taking the classes and tests until they passed. I was sure my husband was struggling with the religious classes as he wasn't really a practicing muslim before. Not only that, he was in incredible shape ~~for~~ and for sure passed the training side of camp easily. After 3 months, I was re-united with someone they told me was my husband, but I wasn't sure. When they took me to meet him, I found a man that was skinny, dirty and carrying an assault rifle. He was so happy to see the kids. They were all laughing and crying at being united. I simply told my husband, "I am going back, I cannot stay here!" He said he was sorry for doing what he did and that I could try to leave but I wouldn't make it. To this day, I still remember the look on his face. A look of true confidence. We both knew what he was saying was true.

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You think you are perfection
 Allow me to give you a correction
 I thought you were my navigator
 Only to find you are just a traitor
 I blew it, my life
 Being your wife
 You were only a trick
 I never thought you could be such a prick
 You left us with nothing, not even hope
 You forgot everything with the proper dose of dope.

Of course, soon after arriving my husband
 Started using drugs. He would shoot up anything
 he could get his hands on. Pain Killers, testosterone,
 anti-depressants - anything. Of course, soon
 after that came violence not only outside the
 house but inside. The man who before wasn't
 interested in having children now required me to
 be pregnant at all times. He began beating and
 verbal abuse with me and both the children.
 Something he wouldn't be able to get away with
 in my country. Now we are in his country.

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According to islamic state this is acceptable. I didn't know that in one person could be so filled with every bad characteristic know to mankind. This was not my sweet, romantic, cooky husband. This was someone I didn't know. All of these things ~~was~~^{were} so completely overwhelming, everyday didn't seem real and was like living on an alien planet. It destroyed me to watch him kick, punch and hit my children. Many times for my efforts in protecting them I would be beaten until I passed out suffering from broken ribs and a badly beaten face. Even our unborn child was subject to abuse as my condition didn't protect me. I don't think he ever realized how bad it was at the time until he woke up sober and had to live with looking at us. That is until he got high again. There would be no hospital visits or police. I only had to guess how bad the beating was by how hard it was to breathe for weeks after and how long it took to heal.

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One life, two lives, three lives for
 "You must have babies so your life is not
 such a bore"

He doesn't know about this huge chore.

"We must replace the ones who have been martyred"

This is, to me, territory uncharted

"I must spread my seed"

He doesn't seem to care I think he's a cheat

"My children will avenge me, that's what I
 believe"

He'll never understand that his children didn't
 even grieve.

It's common knowledge in Islamic State
 that if you are a married woman you would
 be required to, not just have children, but
 continue having children. Men would have
 more than one wife with the primary objective
 of having children. Men with the most children
 had more status and other men looked to him
 with respect. My husband wanted to be
 recognized ~~the~~ and therefore wanted a lot
 of children.

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I only agreed to this to keep my husband from divorcing me until I could figure out what to do to escape the situation. Pretty quickly I was pregnant. While I was pregnant my husband wanted me to help him find a second wife so she could be pregnant too. I didn't fight him on this because I thought the more time he would stay away from my house, the better chances I would have in escaping or at least planning my escape by visiting my neighbors who were not sympathizers with Islamic State.

I wasn't able to help my husband find anyone, I couldn't bring myself to leave the house. After I had our second child, maybe 2 months later I was pregnant again with our 3rd child. The abuse didn't stop.

I should clarify that if my husband divorced me, I would be taken to a women's home and forced re-marry. This was standard for women who were divorced or their husband's died. Not only that but in Islamic state, the mother doesn't have rights to children of the marriage. My children would have been taken away.

I was only looking for a relationship to
bloom and not to fail

Not to fall in love with another man and then bail
As our relationship bloomed into a beautiful flower
I would have been better off jumping from a tower.
How could I have not seen this happening?

The edge of the sword everyday sharpening
His love was based on control, not trust

Our marriage was bound to end in bust.

How did he think I could ever forgive him?

It was never real love, only worth the trash bin.

How could I not know?

This was a life changing blow.

Even in his death, ~~he~~ he does not escape my hate.

I must take responsibility, it's not all fate.

To sum up our relationship, looking back
I was fooled by a man who blinded me. Even
going back before all the Syria bullshit, I'm
pretty sure now he only married me to get his
citizenship in the U.S. I believe the only reason
he kept me around is because he started to

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which
 rely on me so much [redacted] was completely my fault. In life, the only way you keep yourself relevant is by being needed. I mean, think about it. Jobs ^{become obsolete} [redacted] because the job is not relevant anymore and that person is not needed therefore she gets fired. Before coming to Syria, even as difficult as things were sometimes, I didn't want a divorce. I really believed our marriage could have worked. For our marriage to work, I had to be irreplaceable. I didn't let him [redacted] do anything on his own, I didn't let him lift a finger, I did everything. I tried to be the perfect wife. I kept my hair neat and my make-up done, always dressed nice. I always tried to keep him guessing and keep him interested using romance to spice things up. Cooking elaborate meals and keeping the house clean all while working 12 hours a day or more. I knew my husband or at least I thought I did. I knew if he got bored with me, that would be the end. I was so busy with these things I didn't notice the suicidal path we were on and what was going to happen.

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Even after his death I cannot forgive him for bringing us here, I cannot forgive him for the lies and deceit and I cannot forgive him for putting me and my children through everything these past few years. But most of all I'm not sure I will ever be able to forgive myself. Needing him was needing poison and everyday I was dying. I look at myself in the mirror and I see I've aged so much. Thank God he made it so easy to accept his death. At the expense of my children I was trying to make our relationship work.

In the U.S. even with his quirky ways things were "OK". I could deal with the infidelity and the drugs to be able to put my son through college which was the plan. I thought I was doing the best thing by making our relationship work and that's the truth. To have the best life for us was the goal. Had we not ended up in Syria things probably would have kept going the way they were. I could see us growing apart in the future but staying married.

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My Kids starting their own lives with their wife / husband and their Kids. I probably would have had an extra marital affair that my husband probably never would have found out about because he is to self-involved to notice anything about me. Why did I want this man to be the example for my kids? I really don't know what I was thinking. Thinking back now, I can't remember what my plan was. I guess it doesn't matter now, all that has ended.

It's definately time for a new plan.

Prison

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A stadium where cheers once heard
Everyone joyful, free as birds.

Only cheers, no sign of any tears.

Many years have passed

The stadium assigned a new task

The new task of housing blood shed

The place we all now dread

A place of nightmares

A place of true fears

I live everyday as if it's happening now.

My tears join my sweat dripping from my
brow

If only the walls of that place could talk
A conversation leaving the world in shock.

After about 6 months being in Islamic
State I had found a smuggler to get me and
my kids out. This was not an easy task, finding
someone. I didn't speak even a word of Arabic
and no one trusted anyone. If I was a spy for
Islamic State, it would be his head. If he was
a spy, well here's how that story begins.

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The plan was the same day my husband went back to "work" we would leave. Me and my kids would pack after he left as to not suspect anything. My husband would be gone at least a week giving us plenty of time to make our escape.

2 days before my husband was scheduled to leave, our house got stormed by the most feared police in Islamic State, the Amneeyeen or the security men in English. Basically, they were kind of like Homeland Security. There was no sort of justice system with them, the arrested people they knew were guilty and those people would be held until their punishment carried out. Punishment there was anything from prison sentence to execution. They had complete jurisdiction and no one could fight them. Basically they were more feared than God himself.

OK, so the reason I was there? Of course, I was being accused as a spy. At the time of arrest, the door was kicked down.

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7 or 8 masked men invaded my house all holding weapons on me, my husband and my children. My daughter was crying hysterically. I tried to say anything as calm as possible to get her to relax but was obviously impossible under the circumstances. My son kept asking me, "mom what is going on?" He was so calm and brave. About that time a woman walked into the house. She was dressed in full niqab and I had no way of knowing who she was. My dog, just a puppy, sensing the danger started attacking the woman at her feet. The woman kicked my dog, he ran to hide.

The men handcuffed me on my knees while the woman watched. My husband was handcuffed and blindfolded, he was taken outside. I kept telling my son, "It's going to be alright, don't worry, it's only a misunderstanding." Trying to calm them and myself. When the men took my husband outside, they left the door open. I could see them put him into a car and drive off.

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Once my husband was gone, the men started searching the house. I was still sitting on my knees in front of this woman. "Who was she?" One man stayed at her side, never relaxing his weapon. Finally, the woman said something. She drew the hand gun from her holster and pointed it to my forehead. "Do you remember me, um S [redacted]?" (um S [redacted] is something like a nickname. It simply means 'mother of S [redacted]' as my daughter's name is S [redacted]). I was surprised she used this name. Everyone knew me by my real name. I never used these Islamic state nicknames. Most people used the nicknames for security reasons, so no one would know who they really are.

I am still trying to figure out who this woman is while the men are searching the house. I don't have any visitors and no friends. She speaks English and simply knows me as 'um S [redacted]'.

I realized who it was. I felt a shot of adrenaline run through my body. My brain knew quickly how much danger me and my family were in.

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Back 6 months, in the house for women waiting on my husband. A woman came to visit the house. She spoke English. I eagerly went to speak with her. I asked her why it was taking so long for me to see my husband and why we had to stay in the locked house that was more like a prison. She introduced herself as 'um Adam' from France. She asked me where I was from before she would answer my question. I told her I was American. She responded "I hate Americans" and refused to speak with me after. Have you ever just had a bad feeling about someone? You get a shiver and just know you should stay away. I quickly forgot about her.

'Um Adam' - she was a tall woman with a large bone frame. She wore glasses over her niqab. Silver framed glasses. Some said she was very sick with cancer, some said she had a hereditary disease that made her so tall and bones so large. What for sure was true was her hatred of Americans.

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She had been living the jihadist life for quite a long time. She had lost her husband and her son in American drone strikes in Afghanistan I believe. Now her and her other son were living as jihadists in Syria.

OK, so back to sitting on me knees, handcuffed and my children crying. Men tearing my house apart looking for God knows what. I still didn't know why I was being arrested, I didn't know what was going on. I responded to the French woman's question, "Yes I do remember you, How are you?" Something you must know about me, I am not much of a crier or begger. Typically, I deal with situations of fear or stress with sarcasm. The French woman felt my sense of sarcasm as I didn't try to hide it. She responded by hitting me slightly hard with the butt of her Glock handgun. Right in the middle of my forehead. She said nothing else and neither did I.

Apparently, the men found what they were looking for. They all came to the French woman and spoke to her in Arabic. I couldn't understand what they were saying.

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She ~~was~~ cocked her gun and pointed it to the side of my head, obviously eager to use it. She asked me "where is the Key?" I immediately knew she was referring to the Key to my husband's safe where he kept all our money, jewelry and electronics. I told her I could give her the Key but I couldn't open it because the safe required a code AND a Key. I didn't know the code. I only knew where the Key was. What I was saying to her was the truth, I'm not sure why she believed me but seemed she did. She told me to tell them where the Key was. I told her it was in the Kitchen inside a jar of candies on the top shelf. The men went into the Kitchen, I could hear them breaking all the spice jars. Obviously, just throwing them on the floor breaking them looking for the Key. The men came back, no Key. She apparently told the men to pick me up off the floor. They did. She put the gun to my back and we walked to the Kitchen. Once we made it to the Kitchen, she shoved my head against the wall and shoved the barrel of the gun to my temple.

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She pushed very hard and asked me again, "Where is the Key?" I frantically started telling her "It's here, I swear it's here! Just let me look".

She took off my handcuffs so I could get the Key. I reached up to the top shelf and pulled down a jar of candy they didn't see. One man took it from me, threw it on the floor breaking it and retrieved the Key from the broken glass.

I was then blindfolded and re-cuffed and they were guiding me as I walked. As we walked past my children they were crying, I could hear them. They were so scared. The men guided me to a van, I saw it waiting outside before. A plain white van. They guided me into the back. My children were brought out to me. My daughter quickly jumped in my lap where I was sitting on the floor of the back of the van. We started driving. Eventually, we made it to our destination. I had no idea where we were but it sounded like we drove into some sort of garage because the sound of the vehicle had an echo, like pulling into a garage.

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I was guided out of the back of the van. We walked a little ways. I could hear people talking but I couldn't understand what was being said or to this point I still didn't understand why I was being arrested. I was taken to a room where I was sat down in a chair. My blindfold removed. There was a small table in front of me and maybe 5 or 6 office chairs. My children sat in the chairs on either side of me. The French woman sat in front of me on the other side of the table. She said to me "If you confess, you will be spared a lot of trouble". I honestly didn't know what she was talking about. She said to me "you have money, beautiful jewelry, a home you purchased and many expensive electronics, we know you are a spy". At this point, I was confronted with their 'evidence'. Apparently, they got the code for the safe from my husband. They brought in my laptop, binoculars camera equipment and everything else from my husband's safe.

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I Changed the Subject. I Complimented the French woman on her designer glasses and her gold jewelry and expensive non-standard issue Glock. She said "Thank you, these were all gifts from my son." I Said to her "Then your Son must be a spy". She hit me very hard in my face. "What a gross accusation, American." I was again blindfolded and taken to a jail cell with no toilet, no blanket pillow or bed. A closet with a steel door, barely enough room to sit down. I didn't know what had become of my children.

Food once a day and no toilet breaks. Many times I had to soil in my food plate in an attempt to stay clean. I was not allowed a clean plate the next day. Every now and then someone with a little mercy would open the door so I could wash my plate and use the toilet. Many days would go by between these merciful visits.

There was a 10 inch speaker in the roof of my jail cell where quran would be ~~blaring~~ blaring 24 hours a day. So loud my ears would be popping. Sleep would be impossible.

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Every few days I would be taken for interrogation. I was introduced with a fake confession from my husband who was apparently in jail as well. They told me he had been executed due to his confession. They told me that my children would be sold on the slave market as they were the children of non-believer. The beatings and electrocution and threats didn't effect me much anymore. Yes, I was scared but it didn't matter what said they were going to do whatever they wanted. Many times they would tie my hands up to the ceiling, take off my clothes while I was still blindfolded and beat me like a pirate.

I was 7 months pregnant. While they were beating me and electrocuting me in the belly, they would ask me things like "does your baby move when we do this?" Or they would say things like "I like the way you scream". Each time when they were finished, taking me back to my cell [REDACTED] beaten and bloody.

I was forced to watch them execute another woman. From my cell listening to men screaming

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